

# What is DKA?

Diabetic ketoacidosis (or DKA) is a serious condition that can lead to coma or even death. It happens when there is not enough insulin and the cells cannot get enough glucose to make energy. Instead, the body burns fat and in the process, makes acids called [ketones](#). A large buildup of ketones is poisonous to the body and results in DKA.

## What Put You at Risk for DKA?

- Not enough insulin
- Illness
- Severe dehydration

## What are the Symptoms?

- Thirst
- Dry mouth
- Frequent Urination
- High blood glucose levels
- High levels of ketones in the urine
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Deep rapid breathing
- Confusion
- Extreme fatigue
- Fruity odor on the breath

If you have any of these symptoms, [check for ketones](#). If ketones are moderate or large, contact your diabetes team immediately. If unconscious, call 911.

Reviewed by [Anastasia Albanese O'Neill, PhD](#), 7/15/19

*This document is not intended to take the place of the care and attention of your personal physician or other professional medical services. Our aim is to promote active participation in your care and treatment by providing information and education. Questions about individual health concerns or specific treatment options should be discussed with your physician.*

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## Recommended

[Monitoring Ketones](#)

[What are Ketones?](#)

[What is Hyperglycemia?](#)

[Sick Days](#)

[Wearing a Medical Alert](#)

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## Sources

[\*Diabetic Ketoacidosis in Infants, Children, and Adolescents — ADA\*](#)

[\*Diabetic Ketoacidosis Explained - diaTribe\*](#)

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## Research Articles

[\*Diabetic Ketoacidosis: Evaluation and Treatment — American Family Physician\*](#)

[\*Diabetic Ketoacidosis — Medline Plus\*](#)

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